

REMARKS

In further response to the Final Office Action of December 28, 2007, and in response to the Advisory Action of April 17, 2008, reconsideration and reexamination are requested in view of the above amendments and following remarks.

By the above amendments, claim 31 has been amended to recite that the waste liquid supplying apparatus is operable under an intermittent supplying mode, in which mode the waste liquid is alternately supplied for a fixed time period and stopped from being supplied for a fixed time period to said first chamber. These further limitations are supported by the discussion in the original specification set forth at lines 6-11 of page 78, for example, and Fig. 27.

The benefit of the intermittent supply mode was discussed in the previous Request for Reconsideration, which is that a high processing capacity can be obtained as a whole as compared with a continuous supplying method. The Examiner had cited JP 2001-315312 (Tejima) for the proposition of an intermittent supplying mode. The Examiner based the rejection based on the presence of time intervals in washing in Tejima. However, as noted, there is no disclosure of a waste liquid supplying apparatus in Tejima; its presence is an assumption by the Examiner. Then, the assumed waste supplying apparatus is further presumed to have the capability of being turned on and off. Simply because washing takes place intermittently, this does not mean that there is any structure that has the capability of supplying waste liquid intermittently, i.e. being turned on and off. There is in fact no evidence on this point of record.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner replies by stating that the prior art is simply required to show the same structure. However, as noted, the Examiner has not shown a waste supplying apparatus that is capable of having an intermittent supplying mode. The capability of being turned on and off is an assumption by the Examiner, because there is no actual apparatus taught by the prior art. As discussed previously, there could be a continuous supply in Tejima. The point is again that the reference is totally silent on any such aspect and cannot stand for rejection that the Examiner has put forth.

The above amendments go to emphasize this point. With the present invention, the waste supplying apparatus is operable under an intermittent supplying mode in which the waste liquid

is alternately supplied for a fixed time period and stopped from being supplied for a fixed time period to the first chamber. Even if a waste liquid supplying apparatus is assumed in Tejima, and even if such apparatus is assumed to be capable of being turned on and off so as to intermittently supply, there is still no way to say that there are fixed time periods involved for the supply and stopping of supply.

As also previously noted, the recited intermittent supplying mode is a structural limitation of the waste supplying apparatus that the Examiner is required to consider. The prior art that has been cited by the Examiner simply does not support the rejection as it cannot meet the structural limitations of the claims. Indication of the allowability of all of the claims is accordingly requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and the Examiner is requested to pass the case to issue. If the Examiner should have any comments or suggestions to help speed the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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